

# UKHAS Mailing List Moderation Policy

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## Introduction

The “ukhas” and “ukhas-launches” mailing lists will, from now on, be moderated according to this policy. List users are advised to bear these policies in mind before posting a message to one of these mailing lists. If your message is rejected, you will be advised the reasons for this happening. If your message will be accepted after modification, please edit your message accordingly and submit it to the list again.

Moderators are encouraged to adhere to these rules as rigidly as possible, and to use the “Notify author” option when a post is to be rejected, stating the reasons for doing so.

## Moderation Policy

1. Discussions must remain on topic.  
If you are replying to a topic, the **entire** content of your message must relate directly to that topic. If you wish to initiate a discussion about something new, or something similar but not directly related to the initial subject, please start a new topic. If you have multiple questions to ask about different subjects, please use multiple topics.  
**Users:** Is your message better posted as a new subject, stating if necessary that this follows on, in part, from a previous named discussion? If you were to open an email with said subject, would your content be what you expected to read? Is your entire message related to the topic?  
**Moderators:** Users should always be notified of breaches, and those continually flouting this rule should be set to “always moderate”.
2. Check existing sources  
Many UKHAS members have put a lot of work in the UKHAS wiki, which now covers many of the important questions in high altitude ballooning, both in the UK and elsewhere. The mailing list has been around for a long time and its archives are public and can be searched. Before posting your message, please respect this hard work by checking that your question has not been answered either on the wiki or the discussion list.  
**Users:** Have you made an effort to find an answer on the wiki, mailing list archives, or the internet in general before posting the message?  
**Moderators:** If this is something which has obviously been covered before, reject the message and let the user know. If in doubt, allow the message.
3. Top posting is the norm.  
This means that when you are replying to a message, please place your text **above** the quoted text in the message. Your text should be the first thing in the message content. If you wish to reply point-by-point (that is, adding comments into the message text to which you are replying), please ensure you are replying to the exact message to which you are responding, rather than one later in the thread. Whilst there are arguments for both top

and bottom posting - the primary reason behind this rule is **consistency**.

**Moderators:** Bottom posted messages can be accepted but the author should be notified.

4. No advertising.

Content posted to the lists should be asking questions (in the case of “ukhas”) or for discussion. The lists are not a place for advertisement of interesting articles, seminars or blogs, even if they are related to HAB. Posts advertising HAB items for sale should be pre-approved with a moderator, and should only be considered with respect to (8).

**Users:** Are you actually asking a question or initiating a discussion? Could what you’re posting be construed as a notification rather than anything else? If so, consider again whether you should be posting it.

**Moderators:** Anyone doing this without authorisation should be notified and moderated immediately.

5. No personal arguments or insults.

This should be fairly self explanatory. People have differences of opinion, but personal insults and arguments must never take place on the mailing list. Questioning a point or an opinion in a polite manner is acceptable, any form of personal insult is not.

**Users:** If you are objecting to a raised point, are you wording your response as politely as possible? Are there any statements aimed at the person rather than what they have written? If so, revise the message.

**Moderators:** Anyone insulting another user of the mailing list must be instantly notified and moderated. Repeat offenders should be banned from the list after 3 warnings.

6. New topics for new discussions.

When starting a new topic, please compose a new email. **Do not** click “reply” to an old email and change the subject. This does not fool most mail clients, and the threads will end up being combined.

**Users:** Did you click “Compose” instead of “Reply” in your mail client?

**Moderators:** This makes the discussion thread very untidy, please reject the message and ask the author to restructure it.

7. Do not reply to digest emails.

These tend to be unnecessarily lengthy, please consider using “immediate email” mode. Most mail clients can be configured to filter emails for you to read later instead of clogging up your inboxes. Not only does this make the mail easier to read, it means you can directly reply to topics.

**Users:** If you must reply to a digest email, please trim the content to the specific bit about which you are talking, and adjust the subject to suit. Note that you can use the web interface to reply to a specific email even if you are signed up to digests.

**Moderators:** Reject messages containing entire (or too much) digest content.

8. Emails should be of interest to the entire group.

This means that emails for one or two people should be sent to just those people, rather than the entire list. If you wish to say “thank you” to someone, this need not be sent to the entire list. It is useful for the problem and its solution to be archived and seen by everyone, but an email saying “thank you” is not.

**Users:** Content you are posting to the group is to be seen by everyone, is that really what you need to happen?

9. Avoid large chunks of code.  
Please use services like Pastebin or Pastie if you want to show a code snippet. Nominally, anything over 5 lines should not be pasted directly into an email, but common sense applies here. Not only does it make the message readable, but you get syntax highlighting for free.
  
10. Moderators' decisions are final.  
This policy has been written with the general consensus of the UKHAS group (UKHAS Conference, London 2012) and have been examined and approved by all members of the moderation team. Please consider very carefully before arguing against the moderator's decision.  
**Moderators:** If your moderation decision is questioned and you agree that the message might be marginal, please ask them to resubmit the message and ask another moderator to make a decision.